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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Bulgaria

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its twenty-second session from 4 to 15 May 2015. The review of Bulgaria was held at the 8th meeting, on 7 May 2015. The delegation of Bulgaria was headed by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Katia Todorova. At its 14th meeting, held on 12 May 2015, the Working Group adopted the report on Bulgaria.

2. On 13 January 2015, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Bulgaria: Côte d'Ivoire, Ireland and Pakistan.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Bulgaria:

(a) A national report (A/HRC/WG.6/22/BGR/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (A/HRC/WG.6/22/BGR/2);

(c) Summary prepared by OHCHR (A/HRC/WG.6/22/BGR/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Bulgaria through the troika.[1] These questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation stated that the national report had been prepared through a cooperative and transparent process with the participation of relevant State bodies and based on the valuable input of civil society representatives. The draft was published on the official page of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for broad public discussions.

6. Since its first universal periodic review, the Government has made efforts to implement the recommendations of the review and to enhance the capacity of the human rights mechanisms. Bulgaria submitted a voluntary midterm report in 2013. The delegation highlighted the significant progress achieved in strengthening the institutional and legislative framework for the promotion and protection of human rights.

7. In 2013, the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights was established in order to improve coordination among the relevant authorities and representatives of civil society in implementing the international human rights obligations of Bulgaria. Bulgaria introduced the practice of establishing working groups in the process of follow-up to the universal periodic review recommendations. The national human rights institutions had served as members of those working groups.

[1] Circulation by the universal periodic review secretariat of the advanced questions submitted by Sweden was delayed owing to technical reasons.

8. In 2011, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and the Ombudsman were accorded "B" status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions. The Ombudsman had been acting as a national preventive mechanism after the recent amendments to the Ombudsman Act.

9. Since 2011, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, a government consultative body, has been coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015.

10. The delegation stated that the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had been taken into consideration during the drafting of the Electoral Codes, which came into force in 2014.

11. The delegation stated that the Government paid special attention to all those recommendations that called for the reform of the judiciary as it considered judicial reform an important area for the protection of human rights. The recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers had been taken into consideration during the drafting of the 2012 amendments to the Judicial System Act. The updated strategy for continuing the reform of the judiciary, which was adopted in 2015, set the goal to modernize the judiciary and to complete the reform within the following seven years. The key priority of the reform was to provide full guarantees for the independence of the judiciary and ensure its effective functioning.

12. Progress was documented in setting up a mechanism for the compensation of those whose human rights had been violated. The Government had established a procedure for compensating citizens and legal entities for damages resulting from unreasonable delays in civil, administrative and criminal procedures. The National Assembly tasked the Government to submit an annual report on the implementation of the decisions of the European Court on Human Rights against Bulgaria. In 2014, the Government adopted a decision for a one-time payment of compensation to all individual complaints for which damages were recommended by the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. In 2015 the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights approved a legal mechanism for financial compensation following the recommendations of the treaty bodies on individual complaints.

13. During the reporting period, Bulgaria acceded to a number of international human rights instruments, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The delegation expressed the commitment of Bulgaria to ratifying the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Bulgaria had presented its reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It had also issued a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council.

14. In the reporting period, Bulgaria had achieved progress in enhancing the national capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights. The human rights situation had improved, though certain areas required further efforts. Having that in mind, the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights had approved national human rights priorities that included the protection of the rights of the child, persons with disabilities and of migrants and refugees, enhancement of gender equality, the promotion of ethnic and religious tolerance and the effective integration of Roma.

15. The delegation expressed its gratitude to all those delegations that had submitted advance questions and provided the responses to those questions. In response to the influx of refugees in 2013, the Government had improved the living conditions of those in need of

international protection and constructed new facilities and infrastructure with a capacity of 6,000 people. Progress had also been documented in respect of the registration and the processing of requests for international protection.

16. In 2014, the Government had adopted the National Integration Strategy for Individuals Granted International Protection in Bulgaria (2014–2020), which paid special attention to vulnerable persons with specific needs and to unaccompanied minors. Children were provided with legal aid, health care and guaranteed the right to continue their education. With regard to the appointment of guardians or trustees for unaccompanied minors, a draft law which would allow the Agency for Social Assistance to appoint a representative of the child, was forwarded to the consideration of the National Assembly.

17. Concerning the questions regarding hate crime and speech, and intolerance, the delegation stated that its legislation provided for a solid legal framework for combating all cases of hate crime, racism, and xenophobia and the Criminal Code recognized each racial motivation as an aggravating circumstance in criminal offences. Draft amendments to the Code, introducing the criminalization of public incitement to violence or hate on religious grounds were being considered by the National Assembly.

18. There was a substantial improvement in the interaction between the Prosecutor's Office and the investigating authorities in identifying and reporting discriminatory motives at the earliest possible stage of pretrial proceedings. Although sexual orientation and gender identity were not explicitly defined as aggravating circumstances in the Criminal Code, such elements of the crime had been taken into account during the trial and the judgements of courts. In that respect, training was regularly provided to enhance the qualification of prosecutors. Public awareness measures were carried out to promote tolerance and to address hate speech and incitement to racial or ethnic violence in political discourse and in the media.

19. The National Roma Integration Strategy (2012–2020) was to be implemented in two phases: 2012–2014 and 2014–2020. Subsequently, 28 regional strategies and 220 municipal action plans for the integration of the Roma were adopted by taking into consideration the needs and specifics of local communities. The Strategy considered education the first priority of the integration policy. Efforts were increased to strengthen the integration of children of Roma origin into the general education system. Some measures were also taken to reduce school dropouts among the Roma children. The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Regional Education Inspectorates and the municipalities, carried out monitoring of kindergartens and schools to avoid the formation of special classes for children belonging to ethnic groups.

20. Regarding the questions on prison conditions and overcrowding, the delegation stated that two new detention centres had been opened and a project had been implemented to improve the conditions of detention centres and prisons. The authorities had been working together with Norway on a joint project to introduce electronic monitoring of selected categories of offenders in order to reduce the number of prisoners.

21. With regard to the questions concerning the support of families with children with disabilities, and the juvenile justice system, the delegation stated that the legislation provided for equal opportunities and social inclusion of children with disabilities and that financial support was provided to families raising children with disabilities. Several measures had been taken to improve the legislation on juvenile justice.

22. Bulgaria had also been strengthening its measures to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as their integration in all areas of public life.

23. Concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, the authorities have continued to pursue consistent policies aimed at preventing and eliminating any form of discrimination, including against such persons.

24. With regard to the question on domestic violence, the delegation stated that the Government, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had implemented measures to combat domestic violence. The Alliance for Protection against Domestic Violence provided for monitoring of compliance with international regulations and for ensuring maximum protection for the victims. Regular public campaigns and initiatives were carried out to raise public awareness on domestic violence and to increase knowledge about the existing protection procedures. The delegation also pointed to the social services in place which provided support to victims of domestic violence.

25. Regarding the question on the scope of sexual assault offences, the delegation stated that those offences were included in the legislation and that lack of consent was a necessary precondition for fulfilling the corpus delicti and the consent must be given based on the victim's free will.

26. In response to the questions on human trafficking, the delegation reiterated that the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings continued working with vulnerable groups, especially the Roma community, women and children. The Government had implemented several measures to prevent human trafficking for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation, provide assistance to victims of human trafficking, strengthen the prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking in women and children, and improve cooperation with the respective authorities of other countries in investigating transnational forms of trafficking.

27. The delegation emphasized that the 2015 Anti-Corruption Strategy established an independent anti-corruption body with guarantees of transparency in the appointment its management and staff.

28. Regarding the question on media ownership, the delegation stated that the Government presented its programme in 2015, foreseeing new regulations for the acquisition and merger of the media, aimed at eliminating the possibility of influence on the media environment by a single owner.

29. In response to questions, the delegation reported that the issue of the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance had been discussed within the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights. It was concluded that a review of the national legislation was needed to introduce the definition of forced disappearance and the creation of an effective mechanism for compensation of the victims and their families. In this respect, a working group had been established to work on draft amendments to the legislation. The delegation stated that Bulgaria would consider acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families when an agreement had been reached within the European Union on that issue.

30. Concerning the questions on the implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and on a possible ratification of the amendments to the crime of aggression, the delegation stated that the legislation was fully in compliance with the Statute in respect of the criminalization of the offences under its scope. Concrete steps for the ratification of the amendments had not yet been taken.

31. Regarding the question about the representation of civil society organizations in the work of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights, the delegation explained that there were no requirements for prior registration for the participation in the work of the

Mechanism and all human rights NGOs were encouraged to take part in the meetings based on their areas of interest.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

32. During the interactive dialogue, 75 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue can be found in section II of the present report.

33. Spain congratulated Bulgaria for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was concerned about attacks and hate speech against Roma. Spain stated that there was room for improvement on gender equality. It made recommendations.

34. The Sudan appreciated legislative and institutional developments since the first universal periodic review, particularly the adoption of the election codes, the amendments to the Judicial System Act 2010 and the updated strategy for continuing the reform of the judiciary. It made recommendations.

35. Sweden recalled that during the previous review Bulgaria had accepted a recommendation on detention conditions. It referred to complaints about poor conditions and treatment in migrant detention centres. Sweden stated that unaccompanied children were accommodated together with adults in reception centres. Sweden made recommendations.

36. Switzerland noted that Bulgaria had accepted a number of recommendations to combat domestic violence. However, domestic violence was not considered a criminal offence by law. Switzerland was concerned about the inadequate protection provided to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. It made recommendations.

37. Thailand encouraged Bulgaria to put in place appropriate legislative, administrative and other relevant measures to ensure full respect for children's rights, including in the area of juvenile justice and to step up efforts to promote access to social services for persons with disabilities. Thailand made recommendations.

38. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia welcomed the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights, which would enhance protection of the human rights of all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin. It made recommendations.

39. Timor-Leste welcomed the creation of a specialized criminal court to handle cases of corruption and organized crime. It was, however, concerned about the report of incidents of violence based on anti-foreigner and anti-refugee sentiment. Timor-Leste made recommendations.

40. Trinidad and Tobago commended the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights, designed to streamline the efforts of Bulgaria to undertake responsibilities in accordance with various human rights mechanisms. It also noted steps taken to adhere to additional international instruments. It made recommendations.

41. Turkey welcomed the efforts of Bulgaria to cooperate with the international human rights mechanism. It was concerned about discrimination against minorities and impunity for the human rights violations committed in the past. Turkey noted that the legislation restricted the pre-election campaign's language to Bulgarian. Turkey made recommendations.

42. Turkmenistan noted that Bulgaria provided a comprehensive update on efforts undertaken by the Government to improve the human rights situation on the ground. It made recommendations.

43. Ukraine commended Bulgaria for its efforts to implement recommendations from the first cycle of the universal periodic review and noted measures undertaken to promote the protection of minorities, the ratification of several international human rights instruments, and the adoption of a strategy for individuals granted international protection. It made recommendations.

44. The United Kingdom noted the commitment of Bulgaria to improve the situation of Roma and encouraged Bulgaria to take further action at the municipal level. It expressed the hope that the Government would foster understanding in society for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. It made recommendations.

45. The United States of America was concerned that corporate and political pressure was increasing media self-censorship and that corruption was undermining trust in the judiciary and other government institutions. It raised a number of concerns regarding the rights of minorities. It urged Bulgaria to promote and protect the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers. The United States made recommendations.

46. Uruguay noted the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and encouraged Bulgaria to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Uruguay made recommendations.

47. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela noted that Bulgaria had become party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It highlighted efforts to improve the living conditions of Roma and noted the adoption of the National Roma Integration Strategy, and progress achieved in the protection of the rights of women. It made recommendations.

48. Albania commended the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. It noted the human rights priority areas identified such as ethnic and religious tolerance, the integration of Roma and the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees. Albania made recommendations.

49. Algeria appreciated the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and encouraged Bulgaria to continue its efforts to eliminate discriminatory practices against women and to strengthen programmes to fight child labour and the phenomenon of street children. Algeria made recommendations.

50. Angola commended the ongoing legal and administrative measures to strengthen the efficiency of the judiciary. It underlined the development programme 2020 and the national strategy for poverty reduction and the promotion of social inclusion 2020. Angola made recommendations.

51. Argentina noted with appreciation the practice of establishing working groups on the follow-up to recommendations. It noted concerns by treaty bodies regarding cases of discrimination and xenophobia against asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and ethnic and religious minorities. It made recommendations.

52. Armenia welcomed steps taken to promote the rights of national minorities and commended the State policy to ensure a favourable environment for minorities to preserve their cultural heritage and identity. It noted with appreciation measures to combat racism, hate speech, hate crimes and human trafficking. Armenia made recommendations.

53. Australia stated that the expansion of the Commission of Protection against Discrimination and the Ombudsman would strengthen the human rights framework. It

welcomed efforts to reform the judiciary and fight corruption. Australia noted the resurgence of hate crimes. It made recommendations.

54. Austria noted some initiatives taken regarding the juvenile justice system but regretted delays in reforming the system. It shared concerns about the high prevalence of domestic violence, discrimination against Roma and the situation of unaccompanied minor children. It made recommendations.

55. Azerbaijan welcomed the submission by Bulgaria of the universal periodic review midterm report, which had been prepared with the participation of various State institutions and NGOs. It noted the accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It made a recommendation.

56. Belgium commended Bulgaria for its efforts to implement recommendations of the first universal periodic review regarding discrimination, racism, extremism and xenophobia. Belgium considered, however, that there was still room for improvement in addressing certain human rights concerns. It made recommendations.

57. Benin welcomed the adoption of the new electoral code and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. It called on the international community to assist Bulgaria in economic and social development and in the promotion of human rights. Benin made recommendations.

58. Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed the judicial reforms, the advancement in combating organized crime, and the adoption and implementation of laws and policies on gender equality, the rights of people with disabilities and national minorities. It requested information on measures to strengthen the prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking in women and children.

59. Brazil commended the accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and encouraged lifting of reservations to the 1954 Convention. It expressed concern about discriminatory practices against women and domestic violence. It stressed the need to ensure respect of the principle of non-refoulement. It made recommendations.

60. Burkina Faso encouraged Bulgaria to continue implementing the national strategy on gender equality. It urged the Government to strengthen its activities in the area of human rights education. Burkina Faso made recommendations.

61. Canada commended Bulgaria for the creation of a national system for early alerts for abducted and missing children. It also encouraged Bulgaria to pursue and strengthen the efforts undertaken to reduce corruption in all sectors. Canada made recommendations.

62. Chile highlighted institutional changes carried out to improve the human rights situation. It expressed concern about violence against children and adults with intellectual disabilities, insufficient progress on gender equality and discrimination against Roma. It made recommendations.

63. China commended the efforts made to reform the judiciary, provide assistance to vulnerable groups, fight against organized crime, combat racial discrimination and crimes against minors, and promote gender equality. China made recommendations.

64. Costa Rica noted the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and encouraged Bulgaria to take measures to harmonize national legislation and practice with that instrument. It also noted initiatives for human rights education. It encouraged Bulgaria to continue working on judicial reform. It made recommendations.

65. Côte d'Ivoire noted with appreciation the national reforms undertaken by Bulgaria, including the adoption of international human rights instruments. It made recommendations.

66. Cyprus commended Bulgaria for the measures adopted since the last universal periodic review cycle, the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the current initiatives to combat trafficking in human beings and eliminate discrimination. Cyprus made a recommendation.

67. The delegation of Bulgaria provided responses to a number of questions and statements made during the interactive dialogue. It reported on the projects that were funded from the State budget and implemented by NGOs to prevent domestic violence and to protect the victims. All activities had been regularly included in annual national programmes for prevention of and protection against domestic violence and necessary budgets had been allocated. Additionally, legal amendments had been drafted to improve the legal framework relating to domestic violence by taking into consideration the expertise of NGOs and the comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

68. In response to questions on some cases of racism and intolerance, the delegation stated that allegations of manifestation of racism and intolerance had been examined by relevant authorities and, where necessary, steps had been taken to prosecute and punish such acts. The delegation highlighted that Bulgaria did not have a strong record of such acts or manifestations. However, the authorities would continue being vigilant.

69. The delegation reported on several measures taken to ensure the rights of Roma to health care and employment and their social inclusion. The health and labour mediators, selected from the Roma community, served as a bridge between the public sector and that community. The number of health mediators had increased. Preventive medical check-ups were carried out in the Roma settlements and Roma children were immunized. A system of monitoring the Roma integration strategies had been set up and included a unified platform for collection of data at municipal, regional and national levels. Efforts had been made to support the employment of Roma.

70. The delegation stated that the principle of equality and non-discrimination was enshrined in the Constitution and legislation. The authorities continued their consistent policies aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination, including against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. The Protection against Discrimination Act prohibited any direct or indirect discrimination based on a number of grounds, including gender and sexual orientation.

71. The right of children with disabilities to equal access to education was guaranteed by law. The legal framework ensured full integration of children with disabilities in the general education system.

72. In a response to a statement on alleged cases of discrimination, the delegation stated that there was no discriminatory treatment in connection with the construction of places of worship of religious denominations. Places of worship were constructed according to standard procedures and were not subject to any special requirements. Attacks against religious minorities were rather occasional and the perpetrators faced charges for hooliganism on the grounds of hatred.

73. The legislation on refugees and migrants had been harmonized with European Union standards and was in line with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Optional Protocol thereto. Media campaigns had been carried out to create a favourable environment, supportive of the integration of refugees. The Government provided legal and

social assistance, including free legal consultations, education, training, and interpretation services for foreigners seeking international protection. The living conditions of asylum seekers had improved.

74. The delegation reported on a number of measures that had been taken to combat human trafficking and to provide assistance to victims. The capacity of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings had been strengthened. Shelters for victims of human trafficking and specialized centres for protection and support of victims had been built. Referral mechanisms for victims had been developed. A national council for assistance and compensation for victims had been established. Various public campaigns had been carried out as a preventive measure. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation with relevant agencies and countries of destination had been achieved.

75. Regarding the questions on self-identification of ethnic groups, the delegation stated that the policy of Bulgaria on that issue was consistent with its obligations under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe. The right of minorities to exercise their culture was guaranteed by the Constitution and was ensured in practice for all ethnic groups without any obstacle. Furthermore, there were no restrictions to the freedom of association, and cultural identity had been exercised and developed without any impediment.

76. In answering the question on restitution of confiscated properties of a religious community by the communist regime, the delegation stated that the restitution of confiscated properties was made based on court decisions without any discrimination.

77. The delegation responded to a question on the use of minority languages during the pre-election campaigns. While the Constitution guaranteed the use of the mother tongue in many spheres of life, Bulgarian as a State language should, however, be used in pre-election campaigns. The delegation provided statistics on the number of schools where the Turkish language was taught to students belonging to the Turkish minority.

78. The Czech Republic noted with appreciation the response of the delegation to some of the advance questions. It made recommendations.

79. Denmark highlighted the widespread discrimination and intolerance against minorities, especially Roma. While noting the increasing flow of migrants and refugees, it underlined the challenge of ensuring that vulnerable people were treated fully in accordance with international standards. Denmark made recommendations.

80. Egypt welcomed efforts undertaken in human rights education, training for law enforcement officials and combating trafficking. It encouraged the Government to continue efforts to combat racism, including hate speech and incitement to hatred, through the media. It made recommendations.

81. El Salvador congratulated Bulgaria for the participative mechanism adopted for the preparation of its report as well as for the creation of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the importance given to the Ombudsman. It made recommendations.

82. Estonia encouraged Bulgaria to intensify its efforts in reforming the judiciary and combating corruption. It urged Bulgaria to criminalize domestic violence and marital rape specifically and to introduce the possibility of ex-officio prosecution for both offences. Estonia made recommendations.

83. Finland indicated that the positive effect of education on children's future should be communicated more efficiently to Roma parents. Finland welcomed the efforts to combat hate crimes and raise public awareness in order to enhance tolerance in the society. It made recommendations.

84. France commended the recent amendments to the Criminal Code limiting the criminal responsibility of minors and the creation of "blue rooms" allowing children to be heard by the judiciary. France requested more information about improvement in the care of minors. It made recommendations.

85. Georgia commended Bulgaria for the ratification of several human rights instruments and for efforts to reform the judiciary, strengthen the Ombudsman and combat corruption. It welcomed the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the decreasing number of children in specialized institutions. Georgia made recommendations.

86. Germany remained concerned about persisting discrepancies between the law on paper and the reality and about issues regarding the integration of refugees. Prevention and investigation of hate crimes by the authorities was inadequate. Germany made recommendations.

87. Ghana acknowledged the ratification of several international human rights instruments. It made recommendations.

88. Greece commended the practice of establishing working groups on the follow-up process of universal periodic review recommendations. It noted progress in achieving gender equality, the amendments adopted to strengthen the Council on Gender Equality and the awareness-raising initiatives on domestic violence. It made recommendations.

89. Hungary commended a number of programmes, strategies and action plans to improve the situation of Roma. It noted with satisfaction that Bulgaria had conducted free and fair elections in the previous October based on the new electoral law. Hungary made recommendations.

90. Indonesia noted the adoption of a decision for one-time payment of compensation to all individual complaints for which damages had been recommended by the United Nations treaty bodies and asked for further information on that matter. Indonesia made recommendations.

91. Iraq commended the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights, the National Integration Strategy for Individuals Granted International Protection, ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, efforts made to strengthen the capacity of the Ombudsman and programmes aiming at reducing poverty. Iraq urged Bulgaria to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

92. Ireland encouraged Bulgaria to continue progress in the area of gender equality. It urged Bulgaria to amend its legislation to criminalize domestic violence and marital rape. Ireland shared the concern expressed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that defamation remained a criminal offence. It made recommendations.

93. Israel was concerned by the reports on hate speech and attacks to places of worship and worshippers. It also noted that the Human Rights Committee had mentioned the low number of cases of domestic and gender-based violence brought to justice. Israel made recommendations.

94. Italy welcomed the priority assigned by Bulgaria to human rights education and to the fight against all forms of discrimination. Italy made recommendations.

95. Japan welcomed the ratification of the main international human rights instruments. Noting reports of poor conditions of detention, it called on Bulgaria to ensure the protection of human rights in its criminal justice procedures, particularly to improve the treatment of inmates. Japan made recommendations.

96. Kuwait appreciated the efforts of Bulgaria in implementing those recommendations that it had accepted during the first universal periodic review, which confirmed its commitment towards human rights. Kuwait made recommendations.

97. Libya welcomed the progress that Bulgaria had achieved since the first universal periodic review and commended it for its efforts to promote, respect and protect human rights. Libya encouraged Bulgaria to continue to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the functioning of legislative and executive institutions.

98. Malaysia noted with appreciation the progress made in implementation of those recommendations that had been accepted relating to children's rights, all forms of violence and national human rights institutions. Malaysia noted the measures taken by Bulgaria to combat xenophobia, hate speech and human trafficking. It made recommendations.

99. Mexico welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It noted the reform of the judiciary and the willingness to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, considering that such efforts should be intensified. It made recommendations.

100. Montenegro encouraged Bulgaria to improve further the position of socially vulnerable children, particularly Roma children, and to continue developing national policies for tackling the issue of mixed migrations and asylum flows. It asked about the results achieved by the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights.

101. Morocco encouraged Bulgaria to continue working towards achieving the objectives of the "Bulgaria 2020" programme and the 2020 national strategy. It welcomed the measures taken in the area of human rights education and the ones aimed at fighting human trafficking. Morocco made recommendations.

102. Namibia noted with appreciation the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the adoption of the National Integration Strategy for Individuals Granted International Protection. It made recommendations.

103. The Netherlands noted with appreciation that the Protection from Discrimination Act that had been recently amended included protection from discrimination in cases of gender reassignment. It welcomed the efforts of Bulgaria to fight discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. The Netherlands made recommendations.

104. The Niger noted the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the adoption of the legal amendments on the judicial system with a view to modernizing and ensuring the independence of the judiciary. It made a recommendation.

105. Nigeria commended Bulgaria for the judicial reform and for the 2020 national development programme and the 2020 national strategy for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion with a view to reducing the number of people living in poverty. Nigeria made recommendations.

106. Norway noted ratification of a number of treaties and efforts to improve legislation and adopt strategies in the area of human rights. It commended Bulgaria for the reduction in school dropouts among Roma children. Norway made recommendations.

107. Pakistan appreciated the engagement of Bulgaria and its cooperation with the special procedures and the treaty bodies and commended the steps taken to enhance the capacity of the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. Pakistan made recommendations.

108. The Philippines welcomed actions taken to promote human rights, including those addressing domestic violence, human trafficking and the participation of women in the public and private sectors. It made recommendations.

109. Poland commended efforts to improve the social and economic situation of the Roma community, in particular with the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy (2012–2020). It made recommendations.

110. Portugal noted with satisfaction the commitment of Bulgaria to strengthen human rights protection, particularly the creation of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the Integrated Strategy for Prevention and Countering of Corruption. It made recommendations.

111. The Republic of Moldova noted the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights. It inquired about data on territorial coverage and funding sources of shelters and centres for victims of human trafficking. It made recommendations.

112. Romania took note of the progress achieved since the previous universal periodic review, including the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the creation of a national human rights institution and international cooperation on combating human trafficking. Romania made recommendations.

113. The Russian Federation expressed concern about the increase in the number of ultranationalist groups and parties and about continuing discrimination against Roma, including in the areas of education, housing and employment. It made recommendations.

114. Rwanda commended Bulgaria for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, strengthening of the capacity of the Ombudsman and for ensuring equal opportunities for women and men. Rwanda made recommendations.

115. Serbia encouraged Bulgaria to take legislative measures to promote a comprehensive gender equality policy and to honour its commitments towards national minorities. It asked Bulgaria to present activities and plans for further strengthening the identity of different ethnic groups. Serbia made recommendations.

116. Sierra Leone noted with appreciation the reform of the judiciary and of the legislation and anti-trafficking measures. It encouraged Bulgaria to implement effectively policies on violence against ethnic and religious minorities and urged it to combat gender stereotypes and to promote gender equality. Sierra Leone made recommendations.

117. Slovakia acknowledged efforts to improve coordination among public authorities and welcomed initiatives in the field of the rights of the child. It encouraged Bulgaria to continue to implement the National Roma Integration Strategy. It made recommendations.

118. Slovenia welcomed the accession to several international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It also welcomed the appointment of the Ombudsman as a national preventative mechanism and urged Bulgaria to continue such efforts. It made recommendations.

119. The delegation of Bulgaria reiterated the commitment of the Government to continue the judicial reforms and strengthen the juvenile justice system in line with international standards. The delegation reported on ongoing measures to strengthen legislation on juvenile justice.

120. The delegation mentioned the Government's efforts to improve the legislation relating to gender equality, combating domestic violence and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Some progress in addressing prison overcrowding had been documented and additional measures were under way to address further prison overcrowding.

121. In conclusion, the delegation gave thanks for the open dialogue during the review and expressed its belief that the universal periodic review provided a good opportunity for each country to assess the human rights situation as well as share good practices.

122. The delegation expressed the commitment of the Government to continue enhancing the national capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights. Bulgaria remained committed to continuing its cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the follow-up to the review. The delegation made assurances that the questions raised and the recommendations put forward during the review would be thoroughly examined and the position of the Government on all recommendations would be provided before the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council, in September 2015.

II. Conclusions and recommendations**

123. **The following recommendations will be examined by Bulgaria, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than at the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council, in September 2015:**

123.1 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Argentina) (Portugal) (Ghana);**

123.2 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (France);**

123.3 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal);**

123.4 **Take all necessary legal measures for ratifying the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Albania);**

123.5 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Kuwait);**

123.6 **Consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Timor-Leste) (Burkina Faso) (Rwanda);**

123.7 **Consider acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Egypt);**

123.8 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Algeria) (Ghana) (Philippines) (Sierra Leone);**

123.9 **Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) (Philippines);**

123.10 **Consider ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Timor-Leste);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

123.11 **Take steps to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Estonia);**

123.12 **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Slovakia) (Ireland);**

123.13 **Sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Italy);**

123.14 **Continue to bring about the major legislative amendments relating to human rights and the rule of law, in conformity with international principles and standards (Kuwait);**

123.15 **Take steps to establish an A status national human rights institution (Australia);**

123.16 **Continue developing its national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Egypt);**

123.17 **Continue the effort to strengthen the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and the Ombudsman as national human rights institutions in ensuring that those institutions are in line with the Paris Principles, as previously recommended (Indonesia);**

123.18 **Ensure effective functioning of the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (Ukraine);**

123.19 **Afford adequate resources to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in order for this important institution to fulfil its mandate effectively (Namibia);**

123.20 **Provide all necessary resources to further strengthen the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and bring them in line with the Paris Principles (Pakistan);**

123.21 **Strengthen human and financial resources available to the directorate of the Ombudsman responsible for the new role of a national preventive mechanism according to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture so that they match the number of facilities overseen (Czech Republic);**

123.22 **Ensure the allocation of adequate resources to national human rights protection bodies, such as the Ombudsman (Philippines);**

123.23 **Establish a children's ombudsman to safeguard, protect and promote the rights of children and young people, as previously recommended (Norway);**

123.24 **Continue spreading best practices in the field of enhancement of the already existing solid institutional framework (Greece);**

123.25 **Continue further improvement of the protection and promotion of human rights in the country (Azerbaijan);**

123.26 **Ensure the effective implementation of the relevant action plans, including the National Roma Integration Strategy (Hungary);**

123.27 **Further increase the measures implemented under the National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2009–2015) (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

123.28 **Continue efforts aimed at promoting the rights of children, women, migrants and national minorities (Ukraine);**

123.29 **Strengthen the measures aimed at protecting vulnerable populations and so guarantee their full access to public services (Côte d'Ivoire);**

123.30 **Continue increasing assistance for vulnerable persons (Angola);**

123.31 **Continue strengthening the advanced programmes carried out for the promotion of employment, food and social assistance, combating poverty and social inequality, and in favour of national minorities — especially Roma — and other vulnerable sectors of the population (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**

123.32 **Within the framework of the National Roma Integration Strategy developed in 2011, intensify its efforts for implementation of their integration policy, especially in the areas of health and education (Cyprus);**

123.33 **Adopt a national action plan on business and human rights, to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and to subscribe to the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Netherlands);**

123.34 **Consider developing human rights indicators as an instrument that would allow the assessment of national human rights policies (Portugal);**

123.35 **Ensure effective implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy (2012–2020), including by identifying lessons learned and best practices in the implementation of the first phase (Italy);**

123.36 **Continue its efforts in carrying out various programmes for promoting gender equality, combating negative stereotypes about women and their social role, including for the implementation of the "Female leaders in security and defence" project (Albania);**

123.37 **Strengthen its efforts on gender equality, including in combating negative stereotypes about women on their social roles and in ensuring wider employment opportunities for women (Malaysia);**

123.38 **Continue taking measures to eradicate generalized discriminatory practices against women, including stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society (Costa Rica);**

123.39 **Adopt and implement specific legislation on gender equality (Slovenia);**

123.40 **Adopt the draft gender equality act (Portugal);**

123.41 **Adopt law on gender equality (Algeria);**

123.42 **Finalize the internal procedures in order to adopt a specific legislation on gender equality (Georgia);**

123.43 **Prioritize the finalization and subsequent adoption of a law on gender equality, giving special attention to its adequate implementation and dissemination among State entities and the general population (Mexico);**

123.44 **Fast-track the enactment of the gender equality act (Ghana);**

123.45 **Accelerate the process of adoption of the gender equality act (Morocco);**

123.46 **Advance in the adoption of a law prohibiting discrimination against women and establish a legal framework that favours political and economic participation of women on equal terms (Chile);**

123.47 **Strengthen the measures taken on the fight against discrimination against women (Morocco);**

123.48 **Establish measures to further reduce gender inequality in all areas and pay special attention to protection of women from minorities, older women and women with disabilities (China);**

123.49 **Adopt legislative measures to criminalize discrimination against women, particularly of minority groups, disabled women and older women (Ghana);**

123.50 **Continue developing policies for true gender equality and the fight against domestic violence (Spain);**

123.51 **Promote legislative measures, as well as all other types of measures, to promote gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls (El Salvador);**

123.52 **Adopt the draft gender equality act and criminalize domestic violence and marital rape (Brazil);**

123.53 **Take further positive actions in the areas of promoting equal opportunities between men and women and domestic violence (Greece);**

123.54 **Create a system of collection of statistical data on cases of gender-based violence, accompanied by a study analysing the causes why many such cases are not denounced (Spain);**

123.55 **Take steps to improve the equality of access to various forms of education and employment for all women (Trinidad and Tobago);**

123.56 **Take targeted and efficient measures to address the discrimination and exclusion of minorities that include awareness-raising of the majority population of the need to show respect and understanding towards minorities in accordance with the fundamental principle that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Denmark);**

123.57 **Take the necessary measures to fight marginalization of Romani individuals by addressing intolerance and discrimination, and improve their opportunities for education and employment (United States of America);**

123.58 **Ensure equality of access to education, housing and employment especially of the Roma people (Ghana);**

123.59 **Take practical measures for adopting a non-discriminatory approach towards the Roma minority (Russian Federation);**

123.60 **Continue legislative reforms to better fight discrimination against the Roma population and other minorities, racist violence, hate crimes and hate speech (Niger);**

123.61 **Enhance its efforts to prevent incitement to ethnic and religious hatred (Japan);**

123.62 **Take concrete steps to put in place adequate legal protections against incitement of hatred, including hatred motivated by xenophobia and homophobia, in line with the international and domestic obligations of Bulgaria (Australia);**

123.63 **Strengthen the implementation of laws prohibiting discrimination and incitement to hatred in order to protect the rights of minorities such as Roma (China);**

123.64 **Allocate resources to educational programmes in order to change views and neutralize racist ideas that were spread by extremist groups (Russian Federation);**

123.65 **Strengthen the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate speech (Angola);**

123.66 **Take more robust measures to prevent and punish religious hatred, discrimination, racism, extremism and xenophobia and human rights violations committed against minorities (Namibia);**

123.67 **Intensify its efforts to protect individuals from racism, xenophobia and hate crimes by encouraging reporting and ensuring proper recording of hate crimes as well as ensuring that bias movements are fully taken into account in the investigation, prosecution and sentencing of offences. All victims of hate crimes must have access to justice (Finland);**

123.68 **Strengthen the measures aimed at fighting discriminatory acts and hate speech against certain minority groups by focusing on prevention and follow-up to these acts (Côte d'Ivoire);**

123.69 **Give a strong response to hate speech, including in offline and online media, as well as systematically denounce expression of intolerance by opinion leaders in the country (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);**

123.70 **Strengthen the measures to fight hate speech, targeting of persons on the ground of their ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, particularly Roma, Muslim and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, as well as asylum seekers and migrants (France);**

123.71 **Take measures to fight all types of inflammatory speech or incitement to hatred against ethnic and religious minorities and ensure that perpetrators of such crimes are prosecuted and receive adequate convictions and penalties (Mexico);**

123.72 **Strengthen data collection on racist and xenophobic violence in order to identify the sources of this kind of discrimination, which turn into the so-called hate crimes (Uruguay);**

123.73 **Condemn crimes and hate speech, ensure that all racist offences are effectively detected and are subject to investigation and prosecution, and fight against racism and intolerance manifestations in the media (Canada);**

123.74 **Prosecute the instigators of hate crime and provide remedies for victims of hate speech (Sierra Leone);**

123.75 **Double its efforts in combating intolerance and hate speech, including through ensuring proper investigation and prosecution in all cases of attacks and incidents of intolerance against minorities (Malaysia);**

123.76 **Take measures to address the increase in racist and xenophobic violence, including the provision of courses and training on discrimination for law enforcement personnel, judicial authorities and health professionals (Uruguay);**

123.77 **Strengthen measures to ensure the investigation and punishment of hate speech against minority groups, including those made by members of some political parties and groups (Argentina);**

123.78 **Ensure the prevention and full investigation of hate crimes and violent attacks targeting ethnic and religious minorities, including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Germany);**

123.79 **Ensure that all offences based on discrimination are effectively identified, investigated and prosecuted (Israel);**

123.80 **Take the commitment to stop State funding of organizations or political parties that advocate racism (Russian Federation);**

123.81 **Include racist motivation of crimes as an aggravating circumstance in the Criminal Code and make more effective the investigation and prosecution of hate speech and violence, including against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Czech Republic);**

123.82 **Modify its legislation to include discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of offences (Israel);**

123.83 **Take steps to criminalize hate crimes, including discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, both in law and speech (Uruguay);**

123.84 **Include the issue of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in the human rights awareness courses (Uruguay);**

123.85 **Adopt measures to end discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, actual or perceived, in compliance with its human rights obligations (Switzerland);**

123.86 **Take all necessary measures to ensure that the Criminal Code prohibits all crimes against persons or against property on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity (Belgium);**

123.87 **Adopt a definition of torture that includes all elements present in the Convention against Torture (Portugal);**

123.88 **Take further measures to combat ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees by the police, including improved police training, intensified courses on practical aspects of police ethics and specialized courses on hate crime investigation (Norway);**

123.89 **Ensure that detainees in the custody of the General Directorate of the Border Police and the Ministry of the Interior are treated in a humane and dignified manner and that their detention fully complies with the international obligations of Bulgaria governing the administrative detention of migrants (Sweden);**

123.90 **Strengthen its efforts to prevent domestic violence, particularly violence against women (Timor-Leste);**

123.91 **Take efficient measures to ensure that domestic violence is prosecuted as a breach of the law and that perpetrators are brought to justice (Switzerland);**

123.92 **Increase its efforts to prevent domestic violence, particularly against women, and ensure that sufficient shelters are available to women victims of domestic violence and their children (Austria);**

123.93 **Modify the Law on the Protection against Domestic Violence and promote the prosecution for these crimes (Israel);**

123.94 **Consider amending the law so that it provides further efforts of redress for victims of domestic violence, in addition to increased punishment for repeated violations of violence against women (Serbia);**

123.95 **Repeal article 158 of its Criminal Code and ensure that all acts of sexual violence against women and girls are properly investigated and perpetrators are punished (Ghana);**

123.96 **Improve prosecution for and prevention of domestic violence and ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to shelters and other support services (Czech Republic);**

123.97 **Take concrete measures to prevent cases of violence against women, including the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of women and girls (Canada);**

123.98 **Develop policies to effectively prevent violence against women, in particular domestic violence and also provide shelters and assistance to victims (Sierra Leone);**

123.99 **Eliminate all forms of child marriage and raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 (Sierra Leone);**

123.100 **Promote non-violent methods of child-rearing and education and ensure that the law prohibiting corporal punishment is enforced (Poland);**

123.101 **Continue strengthening the capacity of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Sudan);**

123.102 **Continue its efforts in combating trafficking in persons (Armenia);**

123.103 **Continue the actions taken to combat human trafficking, particularly for forced prostitution, begging and underpaid work (France);**

123.104 **Continue its efforts in combating trafficking in persons including strengthening the preventive measures on sexual exploitation of women and children (Malaysia);**

123.105 **Strengthen the normative framework for coordinated government actions against trafficking and care for the trafficked victims, including developing a procedural framework for the return and reintegration of victims of trafficking in persons (Philippines);**

123.106 **Continue the fight against trafficking of human beings and international cooperation in this respect (Romania);**

123.107 **Strengthen existing mechanisms as well as create new legal policies that prevent and combat human trafficking (Serbia);**

123.108 **Expand anti-trafficking measures from the large towns to the rural neighbourhoods and highly populated Roma communities so as to protect the most vulnerable groups of society (Serbia);**

123.109 **Continue the strengthening of the judicial power (Romania);**

123.110 **Continue the reform of the judiciary to ensure independence and impartiality of the tribunals (Chile);**

123.111 **Continue its efforts and initiatives to reform the judicial system (Benin);**

123.112 **Accelerate the judicial reform and enhance the fight against corruption in order to improve human rights standards in the country (Slovenia);**

123.113 **Continue reforms in the system of the law enforcement agencies and the judicial system (Turkmenistan);**

123.114 **Continue the reform process in particular in the field of justice, administration, e-governance and social issues (Hungary);**

123.115 **Review all work under the European Union twinning programme in the prison system and agree to its next steps in order to urgently address: occurrences of ill-treatment (both by police and in prisons), prisoner violence, prison overcrowding, detention facility conditions as well as prison health care and staffing levels (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

123.116 **Further address the protection of victims' human rights as well as punishment for those responsible, with respect to the high rates of domestic violence (Japan);**

123.117 **Put in place new mechanisms that allow victims of hate crimes to be informed quickly and accurately of the changes in their cases, to be heard in the context of legal proceedings and to receive appropriate legal and psychological assistance (Switzerland);**

123.118 **Consider the implementation of the reform of the juvenile justice system as a matter of priority (Austria);**

123.119 **Take necessary measures for establishing a specialized juvenile justice system and continue efforts for the reintegration of former child offenders in the society, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Republic of Moldova);**

123.120 **Continue the effort in the field of juvenile justice, including by considering incorporating restorative justice principles in the juvenile justice system (Indonesia);**

123.121 **Continue to address legal and procedural limitations which obstruct the effective prosecution of crime and corruption cases (Australia);**

123.122 **Continue its efforts and initiatives to fight against corruption (Benin);**

123.123 **Continue the fight against corruption and organized crime and ensure that perpetrators of these crimes do not remain unpunished (France);**

123.124 **Continue its efforts and initiatives against organized crime and conflict of interest (Benin);**

123.125 **Provide effective protection for the family as the natural and fundamental unit of the society, in accordance with its respective obligations under international human rights law (Egypt);**

123.126 **Develop an effective State family policy based on the prevention of separation of children from parents and early intervention measures, supported by an action plan for implementation and specifically designated funding (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

123.127 **Take measures to improve the situation of children who are still living in institutions (Trinidad and Tobago);**

123.128 **Continue its efforts to further improve the situation of children in specialized institutions (Georgia);**

123.129 **Take necessary precautions to protect mosques and other religious sites against the rising incidents of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia (Turkey);**

123.130 **Ensure freedom of expression and media freedom by guaranteeing that journalists and media workers are able to practise their professions in a free and safe environment and that all attacks on journalists and media workers are investigated and by criminalizing defamation (Estonia);**

123.131 **Work to decriminalize defamation and prevent legal retaliation against journalists for exercising their right to freedom of expression, and increase transparency of media ownership (United States of America);**

123.132 **Decriminalize defamation and place it under the civil code in accordance with international human rights standards (Ireland);**

123.133 **Guarantee a safe and independent working environment for journalists and promote transparency and diversity in the media ownership (Norway);**

123.134 **Counter harassment, threats and wiretapping of investigating journalists, bloggers and NGO representatives (Norway);**

123.135 **Ensure that the principle of freedom of association, as provided for in article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights, is respected without any discrimination and applied in accordance with the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);**

123.136 **Take measures to enable the adequate representation of all components of society in all organs of government, particularly women and ethnic minorities (Costa Rica);**

123.137 **Continue increasing quality of children's education, especially in rural areas (Turkmenistan);**

123.138 **Strive to achieve the right to education of all boys and girls with strict respect to the principle of non-discrimination and take concrete measures to fight the high dropout rates in schools and preschools among minority and vulnerable groups (Mexico);**

123.139 **Make steps towards more sustainable reduction of school dropouts (Norway);**

123.140 **Elaborate comprehensive measures in order to guarantee the right to education for children of migrants and of national minorities (Russian Federation);**

123.141 **Ensure that no impediments are created to the preservation, expression, and development of cultural identity by all citizens (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);**

123.142 **Ramp up efforts to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, particularly children (Trinidad and Tobago);**

123.143 **Consider revising its legislation to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, especially the law relating to legal capacity and accommodation of persons with mental disabilities in institutions (Thailand);**

123.144 **Implement the policy for employment of persons with disabilities and the National Roma Integration Strategy 2011–2020 (Sudan);**[7]

123.145 **Develop a package of political measures permitting the independent living of persons with disabilities and prepare a protocol for action to ensure the independent living of persons who do not have family support (Spain);**

123.146 **Adopt, as soon as possible, public norms and policies designed to punish physical and psychological abuse against persons with disabilities and take concrete measures to improve treatment and care conditions, including social protection measures (Chile);**

123.147 **Promote the strengthening of the legal framework for the protection of children and adolescents with disabilities (El Salvador);**

123.148 **Continue its efforts to promote an inclusive education for children with disabilities in the general school system (Israel);**

123.149 **Continue to make efforts to provide care to children with disabilities outside the institutional frameworks (Kuwait);**

123.150 **Uphold the standards on the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Romania);**

123.151 **Continue the initiatives directed towards the promotion and protection of the rights of the national minorities (Armenia);**

123.152 **Ensure that no disadvantage shall result for citizens from the exercise of their right to identify themselves as belonging to any ethnic minority group (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);**

123.153 **Continue its effort in improving the situation of Roma and Bulgarian citizens of other ethnic groups, especially through effective implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy with adequate allocation of financial and human resources (Thailand);**

123.154 **Pursue and strengthen its efforts to improve the situation of minorities, in particular of Roma, and allocate sufficient resources for an effective implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy (Canada);**

123.155 **Take further steps to assure meaningful implementation and adequate funding of efforts to promote Roma integration, especially in the field of education (Austria);**

123.156 **Continue strengthening policies to integrate the Roma population and ensure they have access to basic health and social services, with particular emphasis on the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as education, housing and employment (Spain);**

[7] The recommendation as read out during the interactive dialogue: Implement the strategy for employment of persons with disabilities 2011 to 2020 and the National Roma Integration Strategy (Sudan).

123.157 **Implement the National Roma Integration Strategy with special focus on improving Roma employment in rural areas, ensuring health insurance coverage, improving housing conditions and combating hate speech against Roma (Netherlands);**

123.158 **Continue developing inclusive policies to enable the Roma population to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other persons, with due regard to their participation in its design and implementation (Chile);**

123.159 **Promote the full access of Roma children to education at all levels by introducing a concrete action plan with the budgetary means to achieve this goal. Efforts to decrease the rate of dropouts of Roma children should be intensified further (Finland);**

123.160 **Address issues of poverty, employment, education and housing of Roma people through effective implementation of integration strategy (Pakistan);**

123.161 **Continue and intensify efforts in combating poverty experienced by Roma and other disadvantaged members of the population (Poland);**

123.162 **Transparently prosecute the individuals who committed crimes against all minorities under the communist regime, especially on the protracted legal case of Belene concentration camp (Turkey);**

123.163 **Adopt legislation for the removal from the civil registry of the Bulgarian-Slavic names forcibly given to Turkish and Muslim minorities under the communist regime (Turkey);**

123.164 **Adopt decisions such as the executive decision on the Saint Alexander Nevsky Cathedral on the restitution of property confiscated from the Muslim denomination and all others, so as to demonstrate the non-discriminatory character of the executive (Turkey);**

123.165 **Change its legislation to ensure the exercise of the political rights in the mother tongue as prescribed in the OSCE report of 7 January 2015 (Turkey);**

123.166 **Continue strengthening action aimed at protecting the human rights of the migrant population (El Salvador);**

123.167 **Guarantee the right to education by enrolling all migrant children into mainstream Bulgarian schools and provide necessary language support classes to facilitate their integration (Sweden);**

123.168 **Promote a positive image of and tolerance for asylum seekers and refugees (Rwanda);**

123.169 **Amend its legislation on asylum seekers and adopt a national programme for the integration of refugees (Nigeria);**

123.170 **Fully implement the national integration strategy adopted earlier in the year (Germany);**

123.171 **Adopt the draft law on asylum and refugees, which is to ensure, inter alia, unhindered access to primary education for refugee children (Germany);**

123.172 **Consider granting access to primary education to the children of refugees in the country (Nigeria);**

123.173 **Continue the efforts to host migrants and asylum seekers in order to ensure their integration (France);**

123.174 **Review and reform its legislation allowing for the detention of asylum seekers on the basis of illegal entry, and ensure that the detention of asylum seekers, particularly of children, be applied only in exceptional circumstances after due diligence (Brazil);**

123.175 **Provide all unaccompanied children with appropriate legal guardians, as required by Bulgarian law, to ensure their basic needs are met and their best interests protected (Austria);**

123.176 **Provide all unaccompanied children with appropriate legal guardians, as required by Bulgarian law and ensure their basic needs are met (Hungary);**

123.177 **Take immediate action to ensure that legal guardians are appointed for unaccompanied minors and that proper accommodation and education are provided (Denmark);**

123.178 **Designate legal guardians for all unaccompanied children as required by Bulgarian law, to ensure that their basic needs are met as children and that their interests are protected (Belgium);**

123.179 **Not detain children with unrelated adults (Sweden);**

123.180 **Not detain children with adults unrelated to them (Belgium);**

123.181 **Take into account as appropriate the rights and needs of persons requiring international protection when resolving the issue on granting them asylum in Bulgaria (Russian Federation);**

123.182 **Effectively implement the National Integration Strategy for Individuals Granted International Protection in Bulgaria (2014–2020) with particular focus on the needs of children (Slovakia).**

124. **All conclusions and recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting States and the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

[*English only*]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Bulgaria was headed by Ms. Katia Todorova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and composed of the following members:

- Ambassador Ivan Piperkov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria of the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva;
- Ms. Verginiya Micheva-Ruseva, Deputy Minister of Justice;
- Mr. Andrey Tehov, General Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Dimitar Philipov, Director, Human Rights Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Maria Spassova, Chief of Department, Human Rights Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Milena Ivanova, Counsellor, Human Rights Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Rositsa Ivanova, Secretary, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues;
- Ms. Petya Dimitrova, State Expert, State Agency for Child Protection;
- Ms. Boyka Cherneva, Rector of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior;
- Ms. Marieta Tosheva, Chief Expert, Ministry of Justice;
- Ms. Daniela Masheva, Prosecutor, Supreme Cassation Office;
- Mr. Aleksey Andreev, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria in Geneva;
- Ms. Albena Vodenitcharova, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria in Geneva;
- Ms. Boyana Trifonova, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria in Geneva;
- Mr. Dimitar Ganev, Expert, Council for Electronic Media;
- Mr. Peter Atanassov, Chief of Department, State Agency for Refugees;
- Mr. Alexandar Evtimov, Chief of Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- Ms. Alexandra Dimitrova, Attache, Human Rights Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Teofana Stoyanova, Intern, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria in Geneva.